

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 ACDA-12 /091 W
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R 121748Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0365
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 07543

USSALTTWO

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, UR
SUBJECT: BREZHNEV CONTINUES ACTIVE SCHEDULE, OTHER
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENTS

REF: MOSCOW 7424

SUMMARY. BREZHNEV OFFICIATED AT A KREMLIN AWARD CEREMONY
APRIL 12: HE APPEARED FIT BUT TURNED IN A MEDIOCRE
SPEAKING PERFORMANCE. GROMYKO SEEMS TO BE RECOVERING
WELL FROM HIS RECENT INDISPOSITION. ANDROPOV AND
KIRILENKO ARE PRESENTLY OUT OF THE PUBLIC EYE. INFORMAL
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INTERACTION AMONG THE SENIOR LEADERSHIP WAS OBSERVED
DURING THE APRIL 10 RSFSR SUPREME SOVIET SESSION. END
SUMMARY.

1. BREZHNEV. THE GENERAL SECRETARY LOOKED RELAXED AND
HEALTHY IN LENGTHY TV COVERAGE OF AN APRIL 12 KREMLIN
AWARD CEREMONY IN HONOR OF THE VARIOUS COSMONAUTS

ASSOCIATED WITH THE RECENT "SALYUT 6" MISSION. HIS PERFORMANCE IN READING A BRIEF AWARD SPEECH WAS ABOUT THE SAME AS HIS MEDIOCRE PERFORMANCE IN KOMSOMOLSK (REFTEL). HE READ SLOWLY, SLURRED BADLY IN TWO OR THREE INSTANCES, AND FREQUENTLY SMACKED HIS LIPS TOGETHER.

2. WE EARLIER REPORTED (MOSCOW 3250) SIGHTING LEONID IL'ICH AT TWO HOCKEY MATCHES IN LATE FEBRUARY. FOR THE RECORD, HE WAS AGAIN SPOTTED IN THE VIP BOX OF MOSCOW'S CENTRAL SPORTS PALACE DURING A MARCH 23 HOCKEY GAME. AS SEEN FROM ACROSS THE RINK, HE APPEARED WELL AND STAYED FOR THE ENTIRE GAME (THE ONLY UNUSUAL BEHAVIOR IN THE VIP BOX WAS THAT OF A SECURITY MAN, WHO SPENT THE ENTIRE GAME PEERING THROUGH FIELD GLASSES AT THE SAME GROUP OF FANS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE RINK. THE CONTESTING TEAMS WERE RIGA VS. MOSCOW.)

3. ONE OTHER SIDELIGHT ON BREZHNEV'S ACTIVITIES: DESPITE THE FACT THAT BREZHNEV MET WITH YUGOSLAV FOREIGN MINISTER MINIC A FEW HOURS PRIOR TO THE GENERAL SECRETARY'S DEPARTURE ON HIS SIBERIAN TRIP MARCH 28, BREZHNEV DID NOT ONCE MENTION TO MINIC THAT HE WAS ABOUT TO EMBARK UPON THIS MAJOR JOURNEY.

4. AS WE REPORTED IN CONNECTION WITH THE MINIC VISIT, AT THAT TIME THE YUGOSLAVS WERE STRUCK WITH THE SLOWNESS
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OF GROMYKO'S PHYSICAL RECOVERY FROM WHAT WE PRESUME WAS A PROSTATE OPERATION IN JANUARY OR FEBRUARY OF THIS YEAR. HOWEVER, WE GATHER FROM EMBASSY HELSINKI'S REPORTING OF GROMYKO'S APRIL 4-6 OFFICIAL VISIT TO FINLAND, PLUS SOVIET TV FILM OF HIS ACTIVITIES THERE, THAT HE GOT THROUGH HIS PROGRAM WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT DIFFICULTY. GROMYKO WAS AT THE AIRPORT TO GREET BREZHNEV APRIL 9, AND ATTENDED THE OPENING SESSION OF THE RSFSR SUPREME SOVIET APRIL 10.

5. BOTH ANDROPOV AND KIRILENKO ARE CURRENTLY OUT OF THE PUBLIC EYE. ANDROPOV WAS LISTED BY TASS AS PRESENT TO GREET BREZHNEV UPON THE LATTER' APRIL 9 RETURN FROM VLAD-IVOSTOK, ALTHOUGH ANDROPOV DID NOT APPEAR IN THE TASS PHOTOS AND TV COVERAGE OF THE EVENT. KIRILENKO WAS NOT LISTED AND CLEARLY WAS ABSENT. BOTH MEN WERE ABSENT FROM THE RSFSR SS MEETING THE NEXT MORNING.

6. TV COERAGE OF BREZHNEV'S RETURN TO MOSCOW SHOWED THAT THE KISSING ORDER AMONG THE SENIOR POLITBURO MEMBERS WAS SUSLOV, KOSYGIN AND GROMYKO. THE TV CAMERA CUT AWAY AFTER THE BREZHNEV-GROMYKO EMBRACE, LEAVING UNCLEAR WHETHER LEONID IL'ICH KISSED HIS WAY THROUGH THE ENTIRE OFFICIAL

WELCOMING GROUP.

7. OBSERVATION OF THE SENIOR LEADERSHIP DURING THE APRIL
10 RSFSR SS MEETING DISCLOSED:

--THE FOLLOWING ORDER OF ENTRY INTO THE HALL: BREZHNEV,
KOSYGIN, SUSLOV, KULAKOV, GROMYKO, MAZUROV, USTINOV,
ROMANOV, CHERNENKO, KUZNETSOV PONOMAREV, KAPITONOV,

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USSALTTWO

DOLGIKH, ZIMYANIN, AND RYABOV;

--THE SEATING ORDER IN BREZHNEV'S ROW FROM LEFT TO RIGHT
WAS: LEONID IL'ICH, KOSYGIN, SUSLOV AND KULAKOV, WITH THE
SEAT TO KULAKOV'S RIGHT EMPTY;

--BREZHNEV, KOSYGIN AND SUSLOV SEEMED PARTICULARLY RE-
LAXED ON THIS OCCASIONB, WITH BREZHNEV CHATTING ANIMATEDLY
WITH KOSYGIN, AND SUSLOV SOMETIMES JOINING IN; ROMANOV

HAD A LENGTHY AND LIVELY CONVERSATION WITH USTINOV; THE
OTHERS FOR THE MOST PART WERE PREOCCUPIED WITH PAPERS
AND DOCUMENTS. TOON
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